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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS TO FABRICATE POLYMER ARRAYS ON PATTERNED WAFERS USING ELECTROCHEMICAL SYNTHESIS**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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See application file for complete search history.

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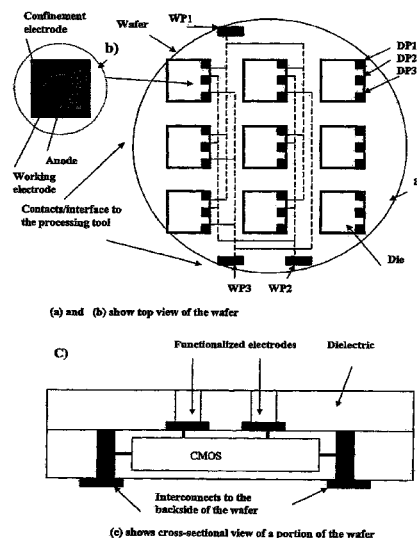
(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **B82Y 30/00** (2013.01); **B01J 19/0046** (2013.01); **B01J 2219/005** (2013.01); **B01J 2219/00497** (2013.01); **B01J 2219/00527** (2013.01); **B01J 2219/00574** (2013.01); **B01J 2219/00576** (2013.01); **B01J 2219/00585** (2013.01); **B01J 2219/00596** (2013.01);

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A wafer having a plurality of dies (also called array chips) on the wafer, the die having an electrode to generate a deprotecting reagent, a working electrode to electrochemically synthesize a material, a confinement electrode adjacent to the working electrode to confine reactive reagents, and a die pad, wherein die pads of the plurality of dies are interconnected on the wafer to electrochemically synthesize the material in parallel on a plurality of working electrodes is disclosed. Also, a method for wafer-scale manufacturing of a plurality of dies and a method for electrochemically synthesizing a material in parallel on a plurality of dies on a wafer are disclosed.

(Continued)

17 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



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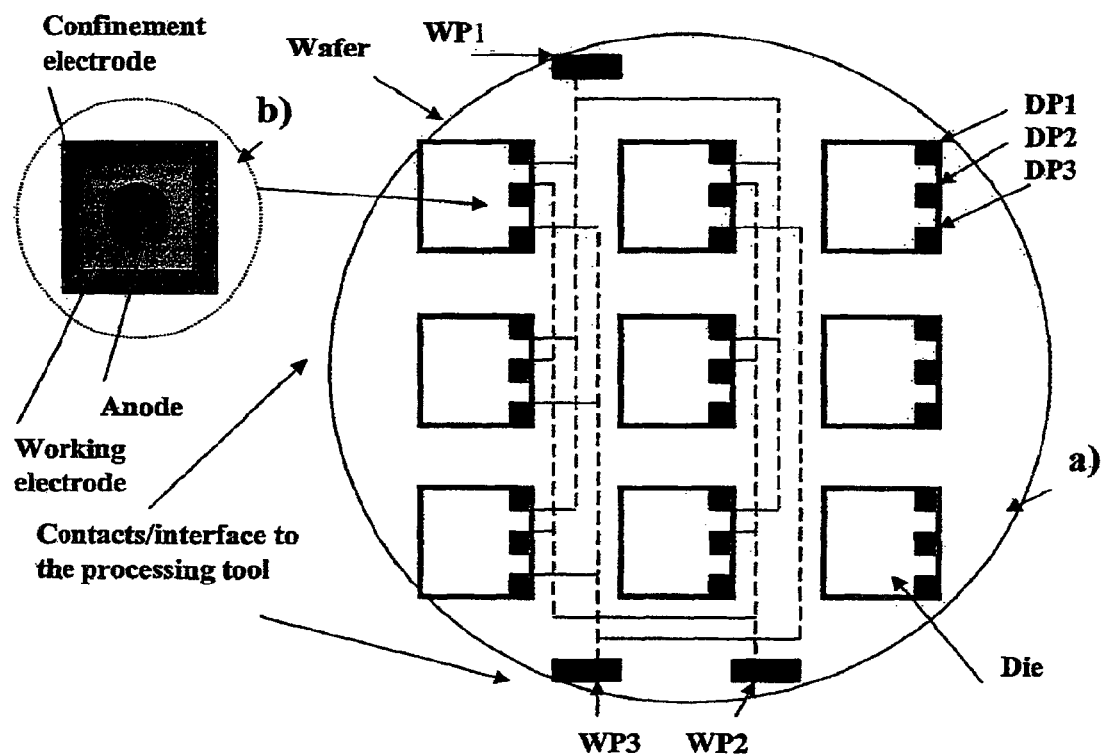
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Figure 1



Figures 1(a) and 1(b) show top view of the wafer

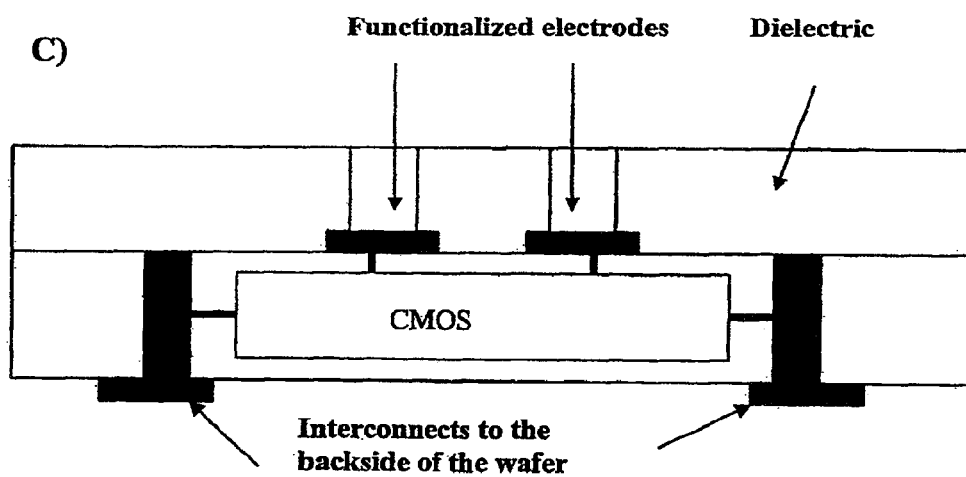


Figure 1(c) shows cross-sectional view of a portion of the wafer

Figure 2

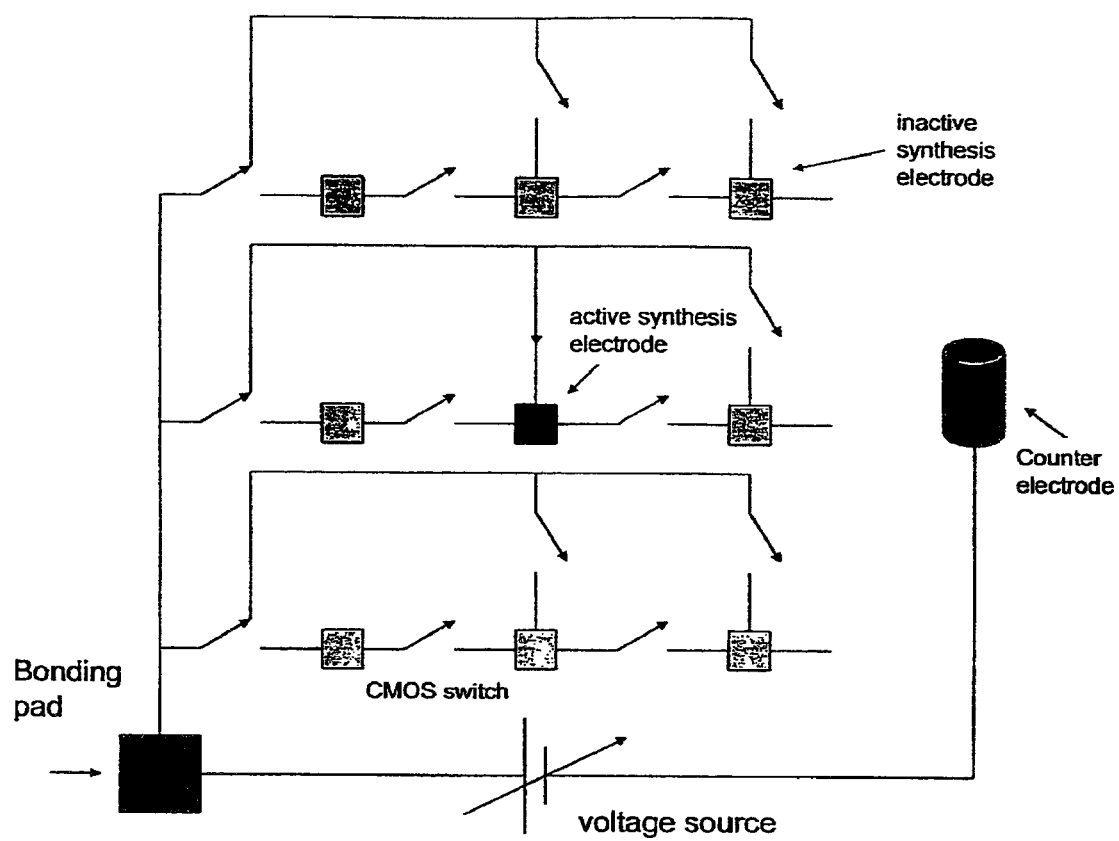
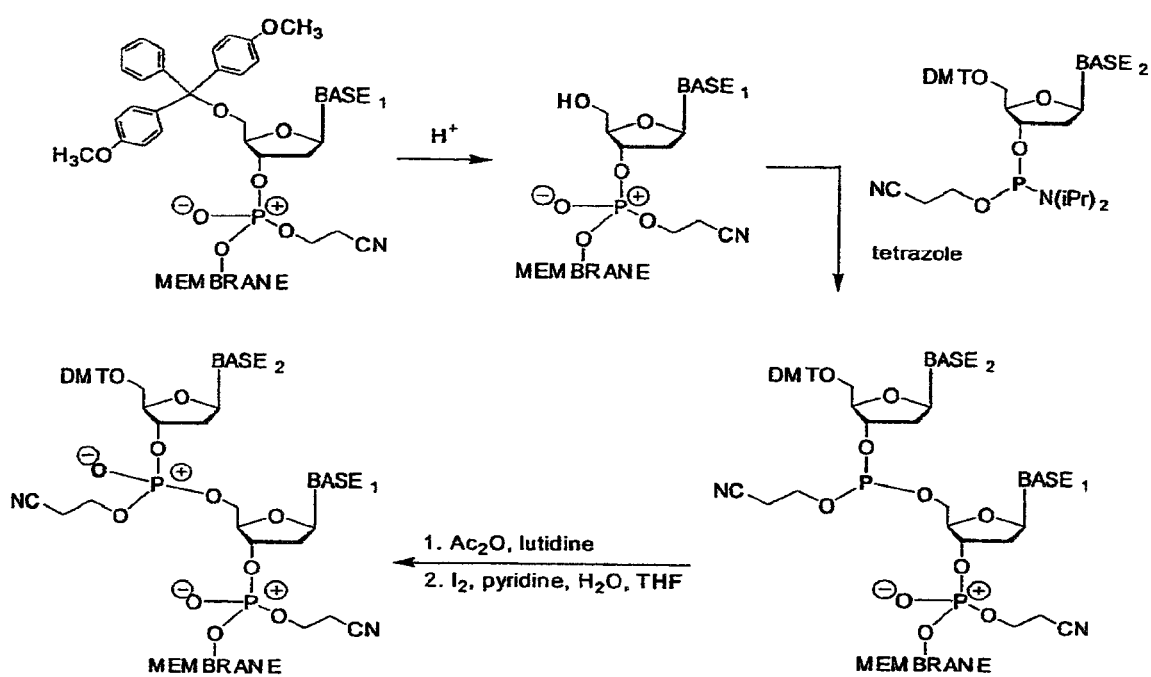


Figure 3



BASE = protected A or T or G or C

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METHOD AND APPARATUS TO FABRICATE POLYMER ARRAYS ON PATTERNED WAFERS USING ELECTROCHEMICAL SYNTHESIS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/242,127, filed on Sep. 23, 2011, which is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/144,679, filed on Jun. 6, 2005, which issued on Nov. 8, 2011, as U.S. Pat. No. 8,053,774. The disclosure of the prior application is considered part of and is incorporated by reference in the disclosure of this application.

FIELD OF INVENTION

The embodiments of the invention relate to polymer arrays prepared at a wafer scale by electrochemical synthesis of a polymer on the wafer, and it relates to methods and apparatus for preparing such arrays. The invention transcends several scientific disciplines such as polymer chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology, medicine and medical diagnostics.

BACKGROUND

Synthesis of high density polymer arrays on a microarray chip is known. Examples of such high density polymer arrays include nucleic acid arrays, peptide arrays, and carbohydrate arrays.

One method of preparing polymer arrays on microarray chips involves photolithographic techniques using photocleavable protecting groups. Briefly, the method includes attaching photoreactive groups to the surface of a substrate, exposing selected regions of the substrate to light to activate those regions, attaching a monomer with a photoremovable group to the activated regions, and repeating the steps of activation and attachment until macromolecules of the desired length and sequence are synthesized.

Additional methods and techniques applicable to polymer array synthesis include electrochemical synthesis. One example includes providing a porous substrate with an electrode therein, placing a molecule having a protected chemical group in proximity of the porous substrate, placing a buffering solution in contact with the electrode and the porous substrate to prevent electrochemically generated reagents from leaving the locality of the electrode (the use of confinement electrodes to prevent reagents from diffusing away have also been described), applying a potential to the electrode to generate electrochemical reagents capable of deprotecting the protected chemical functional group of the molecule, attaching the deprotected chemical functional group to the porous substrate or a molecule on the substrate, and repeating the above steps until polymers of the desired length and sequence are synthesized.

The above-mentioned functionalization methods are carried out one polymer array chip at a time, resulting in high unit cost of the polymer array chip due to the resulting limitations on manufacturing scalability. For many major applications of interest, such high unit cost is likely to be prohibitive (e.g., for disease diagnostics based on the use of high volumes of DNA arrays). The embodiments of the invention meet this need.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1(a) shows the layout of a wafer with pads on the dies (DP1, DP2, DP3) interconnected across the scribe lines to the

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contact pads on the wafer (WP1, WP2, WP3). FIG. 1(b) shows a portion of electrode array on a die called an element, pad, or spot containing anode, working and confinement electrodes. FIG. 1(c) shows a portion of the wafer with interconnects to the backside of the wafer.

FIG. 2 shows a CMOS switching scheme for individually addressable electrodes.

FIG. 3 shows an acid-catalyzed polymer synthesis scheme of an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) can form double-stranded molecules by hybridization, that is, complementary base pairing. The specificity of nucleic acid hybridization is such that a particular DNA or RNA molecule can be labeled (e.g., with a radioactive or fluorescent tag) to generate a probe, and be used to isolate a complementary molecule (target) from a very complex mixture, such as a whole genomic DNA or whole cellular RNA. It is also possible to label the target instead of labeling the probe or label both the probe and the target. This specificity of complementary base pairing also allows thousands of hybridization to be carried out simultaneously in the same experiment on a DNA chip (also called a DNA array).

The polymer arrays of the embodiment of the invention could be a DNA array (collections of DNA probes on a shared base) comprising a dense grid of spots (often called elements or pads) arranged on a miniature support. Each spot could represent a different gene.

The probe in a DNA chip is usually hybridized with a complex RNA or cDNA target generated by making labeled DNA copies of a complex mixture of RNA molecules derived from a particular cell type (source). The composition of such a target reflects the level of individual RNA molecules in the source. The intensities of the signals from the DNA spots of the DNA chip after hybridization between the probe and the target represent the relative expression levels of the genes of the source.

The DNA chip could be used for differential gene expression between samples (e.g., healthy tissue versus diseased tissue) to search for various specific genes (e.g., connected with an infectious agent) or in gene polymorphism and expression analysis. Particularly, the DNA chip could be used to investigate expression of various genes connected with various diseases in order to find causes of these diseases and to enable accurate treatments.

Using an embodiment of the polymer array of the invention, one could find a specific segment of a nucleic acid of a gene, i.e., find a site with a particular order of bases in the examined gene. This detection could be performed by using a diagnostic oligonucleotide made up of short synthetically assembled single-chained complementary oligonucleotide—a chain of bases organized in a mirror order to which the specific segment of the nucleic acid would attach (hybridize) via A-T or G-C bonds.

The practice of the embodiments of the invention may employ, unless otherwise indicated, conventional techniques of organic chemistry, polymer technology, molecular biology (including recombinant techniques), cell biology, biochemistry, and immunology, which are within the skill of the art. Such conventional techniques include polymer array synthesis, hybridization, ligation, detection of hybridization using a label. Specific illustrations of suitable techniques can be had by reference to the example herein below. However, other equivalent conventional procedures can, of course, also be used.

As used in the specification and claims, the singular forms “a”, “an” and “the” include plural references unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. For example, the term “an array” may include a plurality of arrays unless the context clearly dictates otherwise.

An “array” is an intentionally created collection of molecules which can be prepared either synthetically or biosynthetically. The molecules in the array can be identical or different from each other. The array can assume a variety of formats, e.g., libraries of soluble molecules; libraries of compounds tethered to resin beads, silica chips, or other solid supports. The array could either be a macroarray or a microarray, depending on the size of the sample spots on the array. A macroarray generally contains sample spot sizes of about 300 microns or larger and can be easily imaged by gel and blot scanners. A microarray would generally contain spot sizes of less than 300 microns.

“Solid support,” “support,” and “substrate” refer to a material or group of materials having a rigid or semi-rigid surface or surfaces. In some aspects, at least one surface of the solid support will be substantially flat, although in some aspects it may be desirable to physically separate synthesis regions for different molecules with, for example, wells, raised regions, pins, etched trenches, or the like. In certain aspects, the solid support(s) will take the form of beads, resins, gels, microspheres, or other geometric configurations.

The term “probe” refers to the diagnostic oligonucleotide, which is typically a fluorescently labeled DNA or RNA.

The term “target” refers to a molecule attached to the substrate of the array, which is typically cDNA or pre-synthesized oligonucleotide deposited on the array. The oligonucleotide targets require only the sequence information of genes, and thereby can exploit the genome sequences of an organism. In cDNA arrays, there could be cross-hybridization due to sequence homologies among members of a gene family. Oligonucleotide arrays can be specifically designed to differentiate between highly homologous members of a gene family as well as spliced forms of the same gene (exon-specific). Oligonucleotide arrays of the embodiment of this invention could also be designed to allow detection of mutations and single nucleotide polymorphism.

The terms “die,” “polymer array chip,” “DNA array,” “array chip,” “DNA array chip,” “bio-chip” or “chip” are used interchangeably and refer to a collection of a large number of targets arranged on a shared substrate which could be a portion of a silicon wafer, a nylon strip or a glass slide.

The term “molecule” generally refers to a macromolecule or polymer as described herein. However, arrays comprising single molecules, as opposed to macromolecules or polymers, are also within the scope of the embodiments of the invention.

“Predefined region” or “spot” or “pad” refers to a localized area on a solid support which is, was, or is intended to be used for formation of a selected molecule and is otherwise referred to herein in the alternative as a “selected” region. The predefined region may have any convenient shape, e.g., circular, rectangular, elliptical, wedge-shaped, etc. For the sake of brevity herein, “predefined regions” are sometimes referred to simply as “regions” or “spots.” In some embodiments, a predefined region and, therefore, the area upon which each distinct molecule is synthesized is smaller than about 1 cm² or less than 1 mm², and still more preferably less than 0.5 mm². In most preferred embodiments the regions have an area less than about 10,000 μm² or, more preferably, less than 100 μm². Additionally, multiple copies of the polymer will typically be synthesized within any preselected region. The number of copies can be in the thousands to the millions. More prefer-

ably, a die of a wafer contains at least 400 spots in, for example, an at least 20×20 matrix. Even more preferably, the die contains at least 2048 spots in, for example, an at least 64×32 matrix, and still more preferably, the die contains at least 204,800 spots in, for example, an at least 640×320 array.

A spot could contain an electrode to generate an electrochemical reagent, a working electrode to synthesize a polymer and a confinement electrode to confine the generated electrochemical reagent. The electrode to generate the electrochemical reagent could be of any shape, including, for example, circular, flat disk shaped and hemisphere shaped.

The electrode to generate an electrochemical reagent, the working electrode or the confinement electrode that may be used in embodiments of the invention may be composed of, but are not limited to, metals such as iridium and/or platinum, and other metals, such as, palladium, gold, silver, copper, mercury, nickel, zinc, titanium, tungsten, aluminum, as well as alloys of various metals, and other conducting materials, such as, carbon, including glassy carbon, reticulated vitreous carbon, basal plane graphite, edge plane graphite and graphite. Doped oxides such as indium tin oxide, and semiconductors such as silicon oxide and gallium arsenide are also contemplated. Additionally, the electrodes may be composed of conducting polymers, metal doped polymers, conducting ceramics and conducting clays. Among the metals, platinum and palladium are especially preferred because of the advantageous properties associated with their ability to absorb hydrogen, i.e., their ability to be “preloaded” with hydrogen before being used in the methods of the invention.

The electrode(s) may be connected to an electric source in any known manner. Preferred ways of connecting the electrodes to the electric source include CMOS (complementary metal oxide semiconductor) switching circuitry, radio and microwave frequency addressable switches, light addressable switches, direct connection from an electrode to a bond pad on the perimeter of a semiconductor chip, and combinations thereof. CMOS switching circuitry involves the connection of each of the electrodes to a CMOS transistor switch. The switch could be accessed by sending an electronic address signal down a common bus to SRAM (static random access memory) circuitry associated with each electrode. When the switch is “on”, the electrode is connected to an electric source. Radio and microwave frequency addressable switches involve the electrodes being switched by a RF or microwave signal. This allows the switches to be thrown both with and/or without using switching logic. The switches can be tuned to receive a particular frequency or modulation frequency and switch without switching logic. Light addressable switches are switched by light. In this method; the electrodes can also be switched with and without switching logic. The light signal can be spatially localized to afford switching without switching logic. This could be accomplished, for example, by scanning a laser beam over the electrode array; the electrode being switched each time the laser illuminates it.

In some aspects, a predefined region can be achieved by physically separating the regions (i.e., beads, resins, gels, etc.) into wells, trays, etc.

A “protecting group” is a moiety which is bound to a molecule and designed to block one reactive site in a molecule, but may be spatially removed upon selective exposure to an activator or a deprotecting reagent. Several examples of protecting groups are known in the literature. The proper selection of protecting group (also known as protective group) for a particular synthesis would be governed by the overall methods employed in the synthesis. Activators include, for example, electromagnetic radiation, ion beams,

electric fields, magnetic fields, electron beams, x-ray, and the like. A deprotecting reagent could include, for example, an acid, a base or a free radical.

Protective groups are materials that bind to a monomer, a linker molecule or a pre-formed molecule to protect a reactive functionality on the monomer, linker molecule or pre-formed molecule, which may be removed upon selective exposure to an activator, such as an electrochemically generated reagent. Protective groups that may be used in accordance with an embodiment of the invention preferably include all acid and base labile protecting groups. For example, peptide amine groups are preferably protected by t-butyloxycarbonyl (BOC) or benzyloxycarbonyl (CBZ), both of which are acid labile, or by 9-fluorenylmethoxycarbonyl (Fmoc), which is base labile. Additionally, hydroxyl groups on phosphoramidites may be protected by dimethoxytrityl (DMT), which is acid labile. Exocyclic amine groups on nucleosides, in particular on phosphoramidites, are preferably protected by dimethylformamidine on the adenosine and guanosine bases, and isobutryl on the cytidine bases, both of which are base labile protecting groups. This protection strategy is known as fast oligonucleotide deprotection (FOD). Phosphoramidites protected in this manner are known as FOD phosphoramidites.

Any unreacted deprotected chemical functional groups may be capped at any point during a synthesis reaction to avoid or to prevent further bonding at such molecule. Capping groups "cap" deprotected functional groups by, for example, binding with the unreacted amino functions to form amides. Capping agents suitable for use in an embodiment of the invention include: acetic anhydride, n-acetylimidazole, isopropenyl formate, fluorecamine, 3-nitrophthalic anhydride and 3-sulfopropionic anhydride. Of these, acetic anhydride and n-acetylimidazole are preferred.

Additional protecting groups that may be used in accordance with an embodiment of the invention include acid labile groups for protecting amino moieties: tertbutoxycarbonyl, tert-amylloxycarbonyl, adamantyloxycarbonyl, 1-methylcyclobutyloxycarbonyl, 2-(p-biphenyl)propyl(2)oxycarbonyl, 2-(p-phenylazophenyl)propyl(2)oxycarbonyl, .alpha.,.alpha.-dimethyl-3,5-dimethoxybenzyloxy-carbonyl, 2-phenylpropyl(2)oxycarbonyl, 4-methoxybenzyloxy-carbonyl, benzyloxycarbonyl, furfuryloxycarbonyl, triphenylmethyl (trityl), p-toluenesulfenylaminocarbonyl, dimethylphosphinothioyl, diphenylphosphinothioyl, 2-benzoyl-1-methylvinyl, o-nitrophenylsulfenyl, and 1-naphthylidene; as base labile groups for protecting amino moieties: 9-fluorenylmethyloxycarbonyl, methylsulfonylethylloxycarbonyl, and 5-benzisoxazolymethyleneoxycarbonyl; as groups for protecting amino moieties that are labile when reduced: dithiasuccinoyl, p-toluene sulfonyl, and piperidino-oxycarbonyl; as groups for protecting amino moieties that are labile when oxidized: (ethylthio)carbonyl; as groups for protecting amino moieties that are labile to miscellaneous reagents, the appropriate agent is listed in parenthesis after the group: phthaloyl (hydrazine), trifluoroacetyl (piperidine), and chloroacetyl (2-aminothiophenol); acid labile groups for protecting carboxylic acids: tert-butyl ester; acid labile groups for protecting hydroxyl groups: dimethyltrityl; and basic labile groups for protecting phosphotriester groups: cyanoethyl.

The term "electrochemical" refers to an interaction or interconversion of electric and chemical phenomena.

An "electrochemical reagent" refers to a chemical generated at a selected electrode by applying a sufficient electrical potential to the selected electrode and is capable of electrochemically removing a protecting group from a chemical functional group. The chemical group would generally be attached to a molecule. Removal of a protecting group, or

"deprotection," in accordance with the invention, preferably occurs at a particular portion of a molecule when a chemical reagent generated by the electrode acts to deprotect or remove, for example, an acid or base labile protecting group from the molecule. This electrochemical deprotection reaction may be direct, or may involve one or more intermediate chemical reactions that are ultimately driven or controlled by the imposition of sufficient electrical potential at a selected electrode.

Electrochemical reagents that can be generated electrochemically at an electrode fall into two broad classes: oxidants and reductants. Oxidants that can be generated electrochemically, for example, include iodine, iodate, periodic acid, hydrogen peroxide; hypochlorite, metavanadate, bromate, dichromate, cerium (IV), and permanganate ions. Reductants that can be generated electrochemically, for example, include chromium (II), ferrocyanide, thiols, thiosulfate, titanium (III), arsenic (III) and iron (II) ions. The miscellaneous reagents include bromine, chloride, protons and hydroxyl ions. Among the foregoing reagents, protons, hydroxyl, iodine, bromine, chlorine and thiol ions are preferred.

The generation of and electrochemical reagent of a desired type of chemical species requires that the electric potential of the electrode that generates the electrochemical reagent have a certain value, which may be achieved by specifying either the voltage or the current. There are two ways to achieve the desired potential at this electrode: either the voltage may be specified at a desired value or the current can be determined such that it is sufficient to provide the desired voltage. The range between the minimum and maximum potential values could be determined by the type of electrochemical reagent chosen to be generated.

An "activating group" refers to those groups which, when attached to a particular chemical functional group or reactive site, render that site more reactive toward covalent bond formation with a second chemical functional group or reactive site.

A "polymeric brush" ordinarily refers to polymer films comprising chains of polymers that are attached to the surface of a substrate. The polymeric brush could be a functionalized polymer films which comprise functional groups such as hydroxyl, amino, carboxyl, thiol, amide, cyanate, thiocyanate, isocyanate and isothio cyanate groups, or a combination thereof, on the polymer chains at one or more predefined regions. The polymeric brushes of the embodiment of the invention are capable of attachment or stepwise synthesis of macromolecules thereon.

A "linker" molecule refers to any of those molecules described supra and preferably should be about 4 to about 40 atoms long to provide sufficient exposure. The linker molecules may be, for example, aryl acetylene, ethylene glycol oligomers containing 2-10 monomer units, diamines, diacids, amino acids, among others, and combinations thereof. Alternatively, the linkers may be the same molecule type as that being synthesized (i.e., nascent polymers), such as polynucleotides, oligopeptides, or oligosaccharides.

The linker molecule or substrate itself and monomers used herein are provided with a functional group to which is bound a protective group. Generally, the protective group is on the distal or terminal end of a molecule. Preferably, the protective group is on the distal or terminal end of the linker molecule opposite the substrate. The protective group may be either a negative protective group (i.e., the protective group renders the linker molecules less reactive with a monomer upon exposure) or a positive protective group (i.e., the protective group renders the linker molecules more reactive with a monomer upon exposure). In the case of negative protective groups an

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additional step of reactivation will be required. In some embodiments, this will be done by heating.

The polymer brush or the linker molecule may be provided with a cleavable group at an intermediate position, which group can be cleaved with an electrochemically generated reagent. This group is preferably cleaved with a reagent different from the reagent(s) used to remove the protective groups. This enables removal of the various synthesized polymers or nucleic acid sequences following completion of the synthesis. The cleavable group could be acetic anhydride, n-acetylimidazole, isopropenyl formate, fluorescamine, 3-nitrophthalic anhydride and 3-sulfopropionic anhydride. Of these, acetic anhydride and n-acetylimidazole are preferred.

The polymer brush or the linker molecule could be of sufficient length to permit polymers on a completed substrate to interact freely with binding entities (monomers, for example) exposed to the substrate. The polymer brush or the linker molecule, when used, could preferably be long enough to provide sufficient exposure of the functional groups to the binding entity. The linker molecules may include, for example, aryl acetylene, ethylene glycol oligomers containing from 2 to 20 monomer units, diamines, diacids, amino acids, and combinations thereof. Other linker molecules may be used in accordance with the different embodiments of the present invention and will be recognized by those skilled in the art in light of this disclosure. In one embodiment, derivatives of the acid labile 4,4'-dimethoxytrityl molecules with an exocyclic active ester can be used in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. More preferably, N-succinimidyl-4[bis-(4-methoxyphenyl)-chloromethyl]-benzoate is used as a cleavable linker molecule during DNA synthesis. Alternatively, other manners of cleaving can be used over the entire array at the same time, such as chemical reagents, light or heat.

A "free radical initiator" or "initiator" is a compound that can provide a free radical under certain conditions such as heat, light, or other electromagnetic radiation, which free radical can be transferred from one monomer to another and thus propagate a chain of reactions through which a polymer may be formed. Several free radical initiators are known in the art, such as azo, nitroxide, and peroxide types, or those comprising multi-component systems.

"Living free radical polymerization" is defined as a living polymerization process wherein chain initiation and chain propagation occur without significant chain termination reactions. Each initiator molecule produces a growing monomer chain which continuously propagates until all the available monomer has been reacted. Living free radical polymerization differs from conventional free radical polymerization where chain initiation, chain propagation and chain termination reactions occur simultaneously and polymerization continues until the initiator is consumed. Living free radical polymerization facilitates control of molecular weight and molecular weight distribution. Living free radical polymerization techniques, for example, involve reversible end capping of growing chains during polymerization. One example is atom transfer radical polymerization (ATRP).

A "radical generation site" is a site on an initiator wherein free radicals are produced in response to heat or electromagnetic radiation.

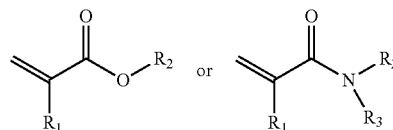
A "polymerization terminator" is a compound that prevents a polymer chain from further polymerization. These compounds may also be known as "terminators," or "capping agents" or "inhibitors." Various polymerization terminators are known in the art. In one aspect, a monomer that has no free hydroxyl groups may act as a polymerization terminator.

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The term "capable of supporting polymer array synthesis" refers to any body on which polymer array synthesis can be carried out, e.g., a polymeric brush that is functionalized with functional groups such as hydroxyl, amino, carboxyl etc. These functional groups permit macromolecular synthesis by acting as "attachment points."

The monomers in a given polymer or macromolecule can be identical to or different from each other. A monomer can be a small or a large molecule, regardless of molecular weight. Furthermore, each of the monomers may be protected members which are modified after synthesis.

"Monomer" as used herein refers to those monomers that are used to form a polymer. However, the meaning of the monomer will be clear from the context in which it is used. The monomers for forming the polymers of the embodiments of the invention, e.g., a polymeric brush or a linker molecule, have for example the general structure:



wherein R_1 is hydrogen or lower alkyl; R_2 and R_3 are independently hydrogen, or $-Y-Z$, wherein Y is lower alkyl, and Z is hydroxyl, amino, or $C(O)-R$, where R is hydrogen, lower alkoxy or aryloxy.

The term "alkyl" refers to those groups such as methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl etc, which may be linear, branched or cyclic.

The term "alkoxy" refers to groups such as methoxy, ethoxy, propoxy, butoxy, etc., which may be linear, branched or cyclic.

The term "lower" as used in the context of lower alkyl or lower alkoxy refers to groups having one to six carbons.

The term "aryl" refers to an aromatic hydrocarbon ring to which is attached an alkyl group. The term "aryloxy" refers to an aromatic hydrocarbon ring to which is attached an alkoxy group. One of ordinary skill in the art would readily understand these terms.

Other monomers for preparing macromolecules of the embodiments of the invention are well-known in the art. For example, when the macromolecule is a peptide, the monomers include, but are not restricted to, for example, amino acids such as the L-amino acids, the D-amino acids, the synthetic and/or natural amino acids. When the macromolecule is a nucleic acid, or polynucleotide, the monomers include any nucleotide. When the macromolecule is a polysaccharide, the monomers can be any pentose, hexose, heptose, or their derivatives.

A "monomer addition cycle" is a cycle comprising the chemical reactions necessary to produce covalent attachment of a monomer to a nascent polymer or linker, such as to elongate the polymer with the desired chemical bond (e.g., 5'-3' phosphodiester bond, peptide bond, etc.). For example, and not to limit the invention, the following steps typically comprise a monomer addition cycle in phosphoramidite-based polynucleotide synthesis: (1) deprotection, comprising removal of the DMT group from a 5'-protected nucleoside (which may be part of a nascent polynucleotide) wherein the 5'-hydroxyl is blocked by covalent attachment of DMT, such deprotection is usually done with a suitable deprotection reagent (e.g., a protic acid: trichloroacetic acid or dichloroacetic acid), and may include physical removal (e.g., wash-

ing, such as with acetonitrile) of the removed protecting group (e.g., the cleaved dimethyltrityl group), (2) coupling, comprising reacting a phosphoramidite nucleoside(s), often activated with tetrazole, with the deprotected nucleoside, (3) optionally including capping, to truncate unreacted nucleosides from further participation in subsequent monomer addition cycles, such as by reaction with acetic anhydride and N-methylimidazole to acetylate free 5'-hydroxyl groups, and (4) oxidation, such as by iodine in tetrahydrofuran/water/pyridine, to convert the trivalent phosphite triester linkage to a pentavalent phosphite triester, which in turn can be converted to a phosphodiester via reaction with ammonium hydroxide. Thus, with respect to phosphoramidite synthesis of polynucleotides, the following reagents are typically necessary for a complete monomer addition cycle: trichloroacetic acid or dichloroacetic acid, a phosphoramidite nucleoside, an oxidizing agent, such as iodine (e.g., iodine/water/THF/pyridine), and optionally N-methylimidazole for capping.

A "macromolecule" or "polymer" comprises two or more monomers covalently joined. The monomers may be joined one at a time or in strings of multiple monomers, ordinarily known as "oligomers." Thus, for example, one monomer and a string of five monomers may be joined to form a macromolecule or polymer of six monomers. Similarly, a string of fifty monomers may be joined with a string of hundred monomers to form a macromolecule or polymer of one hundred and fifty monomers. The term polymer as used herein includes, for example, both linear and cyclic polymers of nucleic acids, polynucleotides, polysaccharides, oligosaccharides, proteins, polypeptides, peptides, phospholipids and peptide nucleic acids (PNAs). The peptides include those peptides having either α -, β -, or ω -amino acids. In addition, polymers include heteropolymers in which a known drug is covalently bound to any of the above, polyurethanes, polyesters, polycarbonates, polyureas, polyamides, polyethyleneimines, polyarylene sulfides, polysiloxanes, polyimides, polyacetates, or other polymers which will be apparent upon review of this disclosure.

A "nano-material" as used herein refers to a structure, a device or a system having a dimension at the atomic, molecular or macromolecular levels, in the length scale of approximately 1-100 nanometer range. Preferably, a nano-material has properties and functions because of the size and can be manipulated and controlled on the atomic level.

The term "polynucleotide" or "nucleic acid" as used herein refers to a polymeric form of nucleotides of any length, either ribonucleotides or deoxyribonucleotides, that comprise purine and pyrimidine bases, or other natural, chemically or biochemically modified, non-natural, or derivatized nucleotide bases. Polynucleotides of the embodiments of the invention include sequences of deoxyribopolynucleotide (DNA), ribopolynucleotide (RNA), or DNA copies of ribopolynucleotide (cDNA) which may be isolated from natural sources, recombinantly produced, or artificially synthesized. A further example of a polynucleotide of the embodiments of the invention may be polyamide polynucleotide (PNA). The polynucleotides and nucleic acids may exist as single-stranded or double-stranded. The backbone of the polynucleotide can comprise sugars and phosphate groups, as may typically be found in RNA or DNA, or modified or substituted sugar or phosphate groups. A polynucleotide may comprise modified nucleotides, such as methylated nucleotides and nucleotide analogs. The sequence of nucleotides may be interrupted by non-nucleotide components. The polymers made of nucleotides such as nucleic acids, polynucleotides and polynucleotides may also be referred to herein as "nucleotide polymers."

The term "nucleotide" includes deoxynucleotides and analogs thereof. These analogs are those molecules having some structural features in common with a naturally occurring nucleotide such that when incorporated into a polynucleotide sequence, they allow hybridization with a complementary polynucleotide in solution. Typically, these analogs are derived from naturally occurring nucleotides by replacing and/or modifying the base, the ribose or the phosphodiester moiety. The changes can be tailor-made to stabilize or destabilize hybrid formation, or to enhance the specificity of hybridization with a complementary polynucleotide sequence as desired, or to enhance stability of polynucleotide.

Analogues also include protected and/or modified monomers as are conventionally used in polynucleotide synthesis. As one of skill in the art is well aware, polynucleotide synthesis uses a variety of base-protected nucleoside derivatives in which one or more of the nitrogens of the purine and pyrimidine moiety are protected by groups such as dimethoxytrityl, benzyl, tert-butyl, isobutyl and the like.

For instance, structural groups are optionally added to the ribose or base of a nucleoside for incorporation into a polynucleotide, such as a methyl, propyl or allyl group at the 2'-O position on the ribose, or a fluoro group which substitutes for the 2'-O group, or a bromo group on the ribonucleoside base. 2'-O-methyloligoribonucleotides (2'- β -MeORNs) have a higher affinity for complementary polynucleotides (especially RNA) than their unmodified counterparts. Alternatively, deazapurines and deazapyrimidines in which one or more N atoms of the purine or pyrimidine heterocyclic ring are replaced by C atoms can also be used.

The phosphodiester linkage, or "sugar-phosphate backbone" of the polynucleotide can also be substituted or modified, for instance with methyl phosphonates, O-methyl phosphates or phosphorothioates. Another example of a polynucleotide comprising such modified linkages for purposes of this disclosure includes "peptide polynucleotides" in which a polyamide backbone is attached to polynucleotide bases, or modified polynucleotide bases. Peptide polynucleotides which comprise a polyamide backbone and the bases found in naturally occurring nucleotides are commercially available.

Nucleotides with modified bases can also be used in the embodiments of the invention. Some examples of base modifications include 2-aminoadenine, 5-methylcytosine, 5-(propyn-1-yl)cytosine, 5-(propyn-1-yl)uracil, 5-bromouracil, 5-bromocytosine, hydroxymethylcytosine, methyluracil, hydroxymethyluracil, and dihydroxypentyluracil which can be incorporated into polynucleotides in order to modify binding affinity for complementary polynucleotides.

Groups can also be linked to various positions on the nucleoside sugar ring or on the purine or pyrimidine rings which may stabilize the duplex by electrostatic interactions with the negatively charged phosphate backbone, or through interactions in the major and minor grooves. For example, adenosine and guanosine nucleotides can be substituted at the N² position with an imidazolyl propyl group, increasing duplex stability. Universal base analogues such as 3-nitropyrrole and 5-nitroindole can also be included. A variety of modified polynucleotides suitable for use in the embodiments of the invention are described in the literature.

When the macromolecule of interest is a peptide, the amino acids can be any amino acids, including α -, β -, or ω -amino acids. When the amino acids are α -amino acids, either the L-optical isomer or the D-optical isomer may be used. Additionally, unnatural amino acids, for example, β -alanine, phe-

nylglycine and homoarginine are also contemplated by the embodiments of the invention. These amino acids are well-known in the art.

A "peptide" is a polymer in which the monomers are amino acids and which are joined together through amide bonds and alternatively referred to as a polypeptide. In the context of this specification it should be appreciated that the amino acids may be the L-optical isomer or the D-optical isomer. Peptides are two or more amino acid monomers long, and often more than 20 amino acid monomers long.

A "protein" is a long polymer of amino acids linked via peptide bonds and which may be composed of two or more polypeptide chains. More specifically, the term "protein" refers to a molecule composed of one or more chains of amino acids in a specific order; for example, the order as determined by the base sequence of nucleotides in the gene coding for the protein. Proteins are required for the structure, function, and regulation of the body's cells, tissues, and organs, and each protein has unique functions. Examples are hormones, enzymes, and antibodies.

The term "sequence" refers to the particular ordering of monomers within a macromolecule and it may be referred to herein as the sequence of the macromolecule.

The term "hybridization" refers to the process in which two single-stranded polynucleotides bind non-covalently to form a stable double-stranded polynucleotide; triple-stranded hybridization is also theoretically possible. The resulting (usually) double-stranded polynucleotide is a "hybrid." The proportion of the population of polynucleotides that forms stable hybrids is referred to herein as the "degree of hybridization." For example, hybridization refers to the formation of hybrids between a probe polynucleotide (e.g., a polynucleotide of the invention which may include substitutions, deletion, and/or additions) and a specific target polynucleotide (e.g., an analyte polynucleotide) wherein the probe preferentially hybridizes to the specific target polynucleotide and substantially does not hybridize to polynucleotides consisting of sequences which are not substantially complementary to the target polynucleotide. However, it will be recognized by those of skill that the minimum length of a polynucleotide required for specific hybridization to a target polynucleotide will depend on several factors: G/C content, positioning of mismatched bases (if any), degree of uniqueness of the sequence as compared to the population of target polynucleotides, and chemical nature of the polynucleotide (e.g., methylphosphonate backbone, phosphorothiolate, etc.), among others.

Methods for conducting polynucleotide hybridization assays have been well developed in the art. Hybridization assay procedures and conditions will vary depending on the application and are selected in accordance with the general binding methods known in the art.

It is appreciated that the ability of two single stranded polynucleotides to hybridize will depend upon factors such as their degree of complementarity as well as the stringency of the hybridization reaction conditions.

As used herein, "stringency" refers to the conditions of a hybridization reaction that influence the degree to which polynucleotides hybridize. Stringent conditions can be selected that allow polynucleotide duplexes to be distinguished based on their degree of mismatch. High stringency is correlated with a lower probability for the formation of a duplex containing mismatched bases. Thus, the higher the stringency, the greater the probability that two single-stranded polynucleotides, capable of forming a mismatched

duplex, will remain single-stranded. Conversely, at lower stringency, the probability of formation of a mismatched duplex is increased.

The appropriate stringency that will allow selection of a perfectly-matched duplex, compared to a duplex containing one or more mismatches (or that will allow selection of a particular mismatched duplex compared to a duplex with a higher degree of mismatch) is generally determined empirically. Means for adjusting the stringency of a hybridization reaction are well-known to those of skill in the art.

A "ligand" is a molecule that is recognized by a particular receptor. Examples of ligands that can be investigated by this invention include, but are not restricted to, agonists and antagonists for cell membrane receptors, toxins and venoms, viral epitopes, hormones, hormone receptors, peptides, enzymes, enzyme substrates, cofactors, drugs (e.g. opiates, steroids, etc.), lectins, sugars, polynucleotides, nucleic acids, oligosaccharides, proteins, and monoclonal antibodies.

A "receptor" is molecule that has an affinity for a given ligand. Receptors may be naturally-occurring or manmade molecules. Also, they can be employed in their unaltered state or as aggregates with other species. Receptors may be attached, covalently or noncovalently, to a binding member, either directly or via a specific binding substance. Examples of receptors which can be employed by this invention include, but are not restricted to, antibodies, cell membrane receptors, monoclonal antibodies and antisera reactive with specific antigenic determinants (such as on viruses, cells or other materials), drugs, polynucleotides, nucleic acids, peptides, cofactors, lectins, sugars, polysaccharides, cells, cellular membranes, and organelles. Receptors are sometimes referred to in the art as anti-ligands. As the term receptors is used herein, no difference in meaning is intended. A "Ligand Receptor Pair" is formed when two macromolecules have combined through molecular recognition to form a complex. Other examples of receptors which can be investigated by this invention include but are not restricted to:

a) Microorganism receptors: Determination of ligands which bind to receptors, such as specific transport proteins or enzymes essential to survival of microorganisms, is useful in developing a new class of antibiotics. Of particular value would be antibiotics against opportunistic fungi, protozoa, and those bacteria resistant to the antibiotics in current use.

b) Enzymes: For instance, one type of receptor is the binding site of enzymes such as the enzymes responsible for cleaving neurotransmitters; determination of ligands which bind to certain receptors to modulate the action of the enzymes which cleave the different neurotransmitters is useful in the development of drugs which can be used in the treatment of disorders of neurotransmission.

c) Antibodies: For instance, the invention may be useful in investigating the ligand-binding site on the antibody molecule which combines with the epitope of an antigen of interest; determining a sequence that mimics an antigenic epitope may lead to the development of vaccines of which the immunogen is based on one or more of such sequences or lead to the development of related diagnostic agents or compounds useful in therapeutic treatments such as for auto-immune diseases (e.g., by blocking the binding of the "anti-self" antibodies).

d) Nucleic Acids: Sequences of nucleic acids may be synthesized to establish DNA or RNA binding sequences.

e) Catalytic Polypeptides: Polymers, preferably polypeptides, which are capable of promoting a chemical reaction involving the conversion of one or more reactants to one or more products. Such polypeptides generally include a binding site specific for at least one reactant or reaction interme-

diate and an active functionality proximate to the binding site, which functionality is capable of chemically modifying the bound reactant.

f) Hormone receptors: Examples of hormones receptors include, e.g., the receptors for insulin and growth hormone. Determination of the ligands which bind with high affinity to a receptor is useful in the development of, for example, an oral replacement of the daily injections which diabetics must take to relieve the symptoms of diabetes. Other examples are the vasoconstrictive hormone receptors; determination of those ligands which bind to a receptor may lead to the development of drugs to control blood pressure.

g) Opiate receptors: Determination of ligands which bind to the opiate receptors in the brain is useful in the development of less-addictive replacements for morphine and related drugs.

The term "complementary" refers to the topological compatibility or matching together of interacting surfaces of a ligand molecule and its receptor. Thus, the receptor and its ligand can be described as complementary, and furthermore, the contact surface characteristics are complementary to each other.

A "probe card" refers to a card whose conducting components are isolated from the environment (for example, the fluid reagents). All conducting surfaces should preferably be isolated—including the pad and point of connection between the pad and probe.

A "scribe line" is typically an "inactive" area between the active dies that provide area for separating the die (usually with a saw). Often, metrology and alignment features populate this area.

A "via interconnection" refers to a hole etched in the interlayer of a dielectric which is then filled with an electrically conductive material, preferably tungsten, to provide vertical electrical connection between stacked up interconnect metal lines that are capable of conducting electricity.

"Metal lines" within a die are interconnect lines. Unlike in the embodiments of this invention, metal interconnect lines do not typically cross the scribe line boundary to electrically connect two dies or, as in the some embodiments of this invention, a multitude of die to one or more wafer pads.

The term "oxidation" means losing electron to oxidize. The term "reduction" means gaining electrons to reduce. The term "redox reaction" refers to any chemical reaction which involves oxidation and reduction.

The term "wafer" means a semiconductor substrate. A wafer could be fashioned into various sizes and shapes. It could be used as a substrate for a microchip. The substrate could be overlaid or embedded with circuitry, for example, a pad, via, an interconnect or a scribe line. The circuitry of the wafer could also serve several purpose, for example, as microprocessors, memory storage, and/or communication capabilities. The circuitry can be controlled by the microprocessor on the wafer itself or controlled by a device external to the wafer.

The embodiments of the invention are directed to placing molecules in parallel on a plurality of predefined regions on a substrate such as a silicon wafer or a material on a silicon wafer, wherein the molecules are selected generally from monomers, linker molecules, polymer brush, and pre-formed molecules, including, in particular, nucleic acids. The embodiments of the invention are more particularly directed to the synthesis of polymers in parallel at a plurality of predefined regions on a substrate, and in particular polypeptides, by means of a polymerization technique, which generally involves the electrochemical removal of a protecting group from a molecule that is proximate an electrode. The embodi-

ments of the invention are also particularly directed to the synthesis of oligonucleotides and/or DNA in parallel at selected predefined regions on a substrate, by means of the disclosed polymerization technique.

However, first consider the following problem recognized by the inventors in the current electrochemistry-based array functionalization methods for the synthesis of polymer arrays (e.g., arrays of DNAs). Suppose one wants to produce 50,000 chips per year with each chip having 60-mers of the appropriate four nucleotide bases at each well (electrode). To make such a chip, one would need as many as 60×4 bases = 240 base addition cycles to synthesize the desired completed polymers. Assume each base addition cycle takes 15 minutes. So it would take $240 \times 15 = 3,600$ min (60 hrs) or 2.5 days to manufacture a chip having the functionalized polymers on the chip, and each chip functionalizing instrument could produce $365 / 2.5 = 146$ chips per year. Thus, one would need about 350 functionalizing instruments working for 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to produce 50,000 chips. Assume that a functionalizing instrument costs about \$150,000 to operate per year, including purchase price the cost of consumed chemicals and salaries of people to run and repair the instrument. In this case, the annual cost operating a factory running 350 functionalizing instruments to produce 50,000 chips one at a time would cost about \$52M. Thus, the cost per chip would be about \$1,000.

The above example demonstrates that the functionalization methods to produce 'one chip at a time' results in very high unit costs of the chips produced due to a lack of technology to integrate manufacturing of multiple dies in parallel on a single wafer. For many major applications of interest (e.g., disease diagnostics based on the application of large numbers of DNA arrays), such a high unit cost per chip would likely to be prohibitive. Other problems facing the 'one chip at a time' manufacturing are between-chip variations in functionalization caused by subtle differences between functionalizing instruments. The embodiments of the invention reduce between-chip variations and address the demand to markedly reduce the chip manufacturing cost in order to realistically accommodate the need for greater DNA array analysis by arriving at a novel wafer-scale electrochemical synthesis of polymer arrays.

Some of the features of the embodiments of this invention include: (1) individually addressable electrodes of each of the individual dies on a wafer, the electrodes comprising an electrode to generate an electrochemical reagent (preferably, an anode to generate an acid), a working electrode to synthesize polymer and a confinement electrode to confine protons or hydroxyl ions; and (2) parallel synthesis of polymers (DNA or peptides, for example) on the working electrodes of different dies on a wafer by using an electrochemically generated deprotecting reagent (an acid, a base or a free radical, for example) that reacts with molecules on the working electrode surface to deprotect, polymerize, and/or protect the molecules using an acid-catalyzed polymer synthesis method.

One embodiment of the invention includes connecting the pads on the dies to the pads on the wafer through multilevel interconnects (two level or more) fabricated across a scribe line to enable the parallel synthesis of polymers on the electrodes at multiple dies on a wafer.

Another embodiment of the invention for parallel addressing pads having the same functionality on the different dies includes via interconnects that traverses from the front side to the backside of the wafer. The via interconnects could furthermore connected to connections points outside of a wafer located in processing tool such as a wafer holder.

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One embodiment of the invention is an apparatus to enable wafer level synthesis of polymers on the electrodes that includes microcells with a wafer holder separated from a counter plate by a micro-gap, a fluid delivery, pad contacts and control modules.

Another embodiment of the invention includes fabrication of nano-material structures on the dies of the wafer in parallel by addressing the electrodes having the same functionality in parallel and attaching functionalized nano-materials (such as DNA modified complementary nucleotide) to these electrodes by means of hybridization and/or electrochemical attachment.

The embodiments of the invention could use silicon technology to fabricate interconnects for silicon chips to enable on-die synthesis of polymers such as DNA, peptides, and DNA-functionalized complementary nucleotide. Optionally, the embodiments of the invention could use wafer processing cluster tools (process instruments) for synthesis. Typically, in volume silicon processing, a manufacturing line has a cluster of instruments (several identical instruments). Each can support a process step or multiple process steps. By the embodiments of the invention, polymer synthesis can be treated as another process step in a device manufacturing line. A cluster of instruments can be configured within a facility to perform wafer level synthesis for efficient high volume manufacturing.

In one embodiment of the present invention, polymers on a plurality of dies on a wafer substrate are synthesized as follows. First, a terminal end of a monomer, nucleotide, or linker molecule (i.e., a molecule which "links," for example, a monomer or nucleotide to a substrate) is provided with at least one reactive functional group, which is protected with a protecting group removable by an electrochemically generated reagent. The protecting group(s) is exposed to reagents electrochemically generated at the electrode and removed from the monomer, nucleotide or linker molecule in a first selected region to expose a reactive functional group. The substrate is then contacted with the monomer or a pre-formed molecule (called the first molecule) such that the surface bonds with the exposed functional group(s) of the monomer or the pre-formed molecule. The first molecule may also bear at least one protected chemical functional group removable by an electrochemically generated reagent.

The monomer or pre-formed molecule can then be deprotected in the same manner to yield a second reactive chemical functional group. A different monomer or pre-formed molecule (called the second molecule), which may also bear at least one protecting group removable by an electrochemically generated reagent, is subsequently brought in the vicinity of the substrate to bond with the second exposed functional group of the first molecule. Any unreacted functional group can optionally be capped at any point during the synthesis process. The deprotection and bonding steps can be repeated sequentially at the plurality of the predefined regions on the substrate until polymers or oligonucleotides of a desired sequence and length are obtained.

In another embodiment of the present invention, polymers on a plurality of dies on a wafer substrate are synthesized as follows. First, a substrate of a wafer having one or more molecules bearing at least one protected chemical functional group bonded on an array of electrodes on a plurality of dies is obtained. The array of electrodes is contacted with a buffering or scavenging solution. Following application of an electric potential to selected electrodes in the array of electrodes sufficient to generate electrochemical reagents capable of deprotecting the protected chemical functional groups, molecules on the array of electrodes are deprotected to expose

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reactive functional groups, thereby preparing them for bonding. A monomer solution or a pre-formed molecule (called the first molecule), such as proteins, nucleic acids, polysaccharides, and porphyrins, is then contacted with the substrate surface of the wafer and the monomers or pre-formed molecules are bonded in parallel with a plurality of deprotected chemical functional groups on a plurality of dies on the wafer.

Another sufficient potential is subsequently applied to select electrodes in the array to deprotect at least one chemical functional group on the bonded molecule or another of the molecules bearing at least one protected chemical functional group on a plurality of dies on the wafer. A different monomer or pre-formed molecule (called the second molecule) having at least one protected chemical functional group is subsequently bonded to a deprotected chemical functional group of the bonded molecule or the other deprotected molecule located at a plurality of dies of the wafer. The selective deprotection and bonding steps can be repeated sequentially until polymers or oligonucleotides of a desired sequence and length are obtained. The selective deprotection step is repeated by applying another potential sufficient to effect deprotection of a chemical functional group on a bonded protected monomer or a bonded protected molecule. The subsequent bonding of an additional monomer or pre-formed molecule to the deprotected chemical functional group(s) until at least two separate polymers or oligonucleotides of desired length are formed on the substrate.

In order to produce separate and pure polymers and to minimize, and, if possible to eliminate, chemical cross-talk between spots of a die or between dies on a wafer, it is desirable to keep the reactive molecules (e.g., protons, hydroxyl ions, or free radicals) confined to the area immediately proximate to a spot. Preferred embodiments of the present invention use a confinement electrode to confine reactive molecules, and that actively prevents chemical cross-talk caused by diffusion of the electrochemically generated ions from one spot to another spot within a die or between dies. For example, when an electrode exposed to an aqueous or partially aqueous media is biased to a sufficiently positive (or negative) potential, protons (or hydroxyl ions) may be produced as products of water hydrolysis. Protons, for example, are useful for removing electrochemical protecting groups from several molecules useful in combinatorial synthesis, for example, peptides, nucleic acids, and polysaccharides.

The embodiments of the invention can be used to carry out the electrochemical syntheses of polymers such as DNA and peptides according to any of a variety of approaches known to person skilled in the art. For example, any of a variety of reduction/oxidation (redox) reactions may be employed to electrochemically control the localization and pH of a solution on Si-based electrodes to enable the attachment and elongation of polymers. In such methods, the electrical current drives the oxidation of an appropriate molecule at the anode(s) and the reduction of another molecule at the cathode(s) to control the kinetics and stoichiometry of acid-catalyzed organic syntheses on a Si-based circuit. Such methods can also be used to generate high pH (basic) solutions, and to drive any other electrochemical redox reactions known to one skilled in the art that may or may not result in pH changes (e.g., can also be used to generate reactive free radicals).

In one embodiment of the invention, the electrochemically generated acid solutions also can enable coupling reactions between the monomers and acceptors that are widely used to synthesize polymers such as nucleic acid oligomers and peptides.

Another embodiment of the invention is electrochemical detection using the array chip. For example, a variety of

published methods describe DNA binding detection. Typically these methods employ measurements of current flow across a DNA monolayer tethered to a circuit on a silicon substrate. Current flow properties proportionately change when the DNA monolayers are bound by an appropriate redox molecule-tagged test DNA or untagged DNA that is co-added with a redox-active molecule that specifically binds double stranded DNA. Enzyme amplification methods can also be incorporated into such assays in order to enhance the electrochemical signal generated by binding events. Note that these methods can also be adapted by one skilled in the art to measure the binding between other molecular species such as between two proteins or a protein and a small molecule.

The embodiments of the invention cover arrays used for research (typically high density with many different probes) as well as Diagnostics (typically low density because one is generally looking for only a few specific analytes in a sample for diagnostics). The array chip of an embodiment of the invention could be used for screening large numbers of polymers for biological activity, for example. To screen for biological activity, for example, in the field of pharmaceutical drug discovery, the substrate is exposed to one or more receptors such as antibodies, whole cells, receptors on vesicles, lipids, or any one of a variety of other receptors. The probes are preferably labeled with, for example, an electrochemical marker, an electro-chemiluminescent marker, a chemiluminescent marker, a fluorescent marker, a radioactive marker, or a labeled antibody reactive with the probe. The position of the probe on the substrate after hybridization is detected with, for example, electrochemical, fluorescence or autoradiographic techniques.

The array chip could also be used for therapeutic materials development, i.e., for drug development and for biomaterial studies, as well as for biomedical research, analytical chemistry, high throughput compound screening, and bioprocess monitoring. An exemplary application includes applications in which various known ligands for particular receptors can be placed on the array chip and hybridization could be performed between the ligands and labeled receptors.

Yet another application of the array chip of an embodiment of this invention includes, for example, sequencing genomic DNA by the technique of sequencing by hybridization. Non-biological applications are also contemplated, and include the production of organic materials with varying levels of doping for use, for example, in semiconductor devices. Other examples of non-biological uses include anticorrosives, antifoulants, and paints.

It is specifically contemplated that the array chip and/or the methods of manufacturing the array chip of an embodiment of the invention could be used for developing new materials, particularly nano-materials for many purposes including, but not limited to corrosion resistance, battery energy storage, electroplating, low voltage phosphorescence, bone graft compatibility, resisting fouling by marine organisms, superconductivity, epitaxial lattice matching, or chemical catalysis. Materials for these or other utilities may be formed proximate to one or a plurality of the electrodes in parallel on a plurality of dies of a silicon wafer, for example. Alternatively, materials may be formed by modifying the surface of one or a plurality of electrodes on a plurality of dies by generating reagents electrochemically.

It is further contemplated that an array chip of the embodiments of the invention could be used to develop screening methods for testing materials. That is, reagents electrochemically generated by an electrode on a die could be used to test the physical and chemical properties of materials proximate to the electrode. For example, the array chip could be used for

testing corrosion resistance, electroplating efficiency, chemical kinetics, superconductivity, electro-chemiluminescence and catalyst lifetimes.

The advantageous characteristics of some of the embodiments of the invention are illustrated in the following examples, which are intended to be merely exemplary of the invention.

The array chips of the embodiments of the invention are preferably silicon bio-chips built by using silicon process technology and SRAM like architecture with circuitries including electrode arrays, decoders, serial-peripheral interface, on chip amplification, for example. The silicon bio-chip for wafer level polymer synthesis could be fabricated by the following steps, for example, which are described with reference with FIG. 1.

First, fabricate a wafer shown in FIG. 1(a) containing a CMOS circuitry to be connected to individually addressable electrodes. The CMOS circuitry amplifies the signal, reads and writes information on the individually addressable electrodes (i.e. functionalize the individually addressable electrodes and read out binding events), besides performing other functions.

Second, fabricate the individually addressable electrodes for each individual dies on the wafer including anodes to generate acid, working electrodes to synthesize polymer and confinement electrodes to confine protons. These electrodes are shown in FIG. 1(b).

Third, interconnect the die pads on the dies on the wafer to wafer level pads for parallel synthesis of polymers on the working electrodes. The die pads are shown as DP1, DP2, DP3 and the wafer-pads are shown as WP1, WP2, WP3 in FIG. 1(a). The die pads are used for power, signal delivery, for example. The die pads could be interconnected by either using a multilevel interconnect (two or more layers) across a scribe line on the front side of the wafer as shown in FIG. 1(b) or using a via interconnect that traverses from the front side of the wafer to the backside of the wafer FIG. 1(c). The via connect could be connected to electrical contact on the backside of the wafer and further to an outside contact located outside the wafer in a processing tool such as a wafer holder. FIG. 1(c) shows a localized and generalized cross-section view of the through wafer interconnect concept. The diagram shows the active electrode in an ILD well, the CMOS circuitry that controls the electrode, and the IO (input/output) interconnect to the outside instrument) connecting the CMOS circuitry to pads on the backside of the wafer. Electrochemical synthesis occurs on the functionalized electrodes when activated. The CMOS circuitry, shown here as a block diagram, decodes the input address and signal. In contrast to typical silicon devices in which power and signal is input to the CMOS circuitry through a topside wire bond pad or solder bump connection, in this technique, the connection is made through the backside via.

Fourth, perform parallel synthesis of a material such as polymers (e.g., DNA) or a nano-material on the individually addressable working electrodes of different spots of a die or of different dies on the wafer by using electrochemically generated reagents (acids, bases, radicals, etc.) that reacts with a molecule on the surface of the working electrode. FIG. 2 shows CMOS switching scheme for individually addressing different working electrodes on the wafer. In FIG. 2, each die pad on the die branches into a large array of synthesis electrodes. These electrodes are exposed to the electrolyte and can be modified with polymer (e.g., DNA). CMOS switches ensure that a given electrode (or an entire column, or an entire row) can be modified one base pair at a time. Voltage source and counter electrode (plating tool) are shown to complete the

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electrical circuit. FIG. 3 shows an exemplary scheme for the synthesis of polymers on the individually addressable electrodes on the wafer by generating acid on the electrodes through an electrochemical reaction to polymerize, protect, and/or deprotect polymer subunits using an acid-catalyzed polymer synthesis scheme. The synthesis scheme of FIG. 3 is particularly applicable for acid catalyzed polymer synthesis for the manufacture of nucleic acids such as DNA. FIG. 3 shows that by applying a voltage to a metal electrode, protons are generated in a redox buffer. The protons in turn catalyze the synthesis of DNA one base pair at a time according to the synthesis scheme of FIG. 3. While performing of the parallel synthesis of a material it would be preferable to apply a specific potential to confinement electrodes surrounding the working electrodes to effectively confine protons to the working electrodes by an electrochemical means and to prevent diffusion-controlled spreading of protons to neighboring working electrodes. Another embodiment includes parallel synthesis of polymers such as DNA on the working or synthesis electrodes of different dies by connecting to the pads on the wafer using a sealed probe card.

Preferably, the device making electrical connection from the instrument controlling the synthesis should be isolated from the reagents washing over the wafer. If the connecting pads on the wafer are sufficiently far from the electrodes, this is accomplished with a single wafer-level seal or gasket. The backside via technique and the wafer-level pad technique (with die connected with the inter-die metal lines) are examples of making electrical connection the instrument controlling the synthesis to the dies by embodiments of the invention. A single gasket could encircle all the electrodes and the connections/pads to the instrument could be outside the gasket on the wafer edge or wafer backside. It is also possible to isolate the electrical connections independently and locally with a probe card that lands on each pad on each die. In this case, there would preferably be no need to connect pads between die or route connection of the pads to the backside. For example, if the wafer has 100 die with 100 pads each, a probe card with 100×100-10000 connecting probes could land on each pad on the wafer, isolate that connection from the reagents with a pad-level gasket, and perform the synthesis. Wafer pads could employ seal probe cards or a wafer level isolating gasket.

Yet, in another embodiment related to the fabrication of nano-material structures on the dies of the wafer in parallel could be performed by addressing in parallel the working electrodes and attaching functionalized nano-materials (such as a DNA modified complementary nucleotide) to this electrodes by means of hybridization and/or electrochemical attachment.

Fifth, dice and cut the wafer into individual dies.

Finally, mount the die on a substrate through the use of the scribe lines on the front side of the wafer or through the use of contacts on the backside of the wafer.

This application discloses several numerical range limitations that support any range within the disclosed numerical ranges even though a precise range limitation is not stated verbatim in the specification because the embodiments of the invention could be practiced throughout the disclosed numerical ranges. Finally, the entire disclosure of the patents and publications referred in this application, if any, are hereby incorporated herein in entirety by reference.

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The invention claimed is:

1. A method of manufacturing a plurality of dies, comprising:

fabricating individually addressable electrodes for the plurality of dies on a wafer, the addressable electrodes comprising, an electrode to generate a deprotecting reagent, a working electrode to form a material and confinement electrodes to confine a reductive molecule or an oxidative molecule;

further comprising interconnecting die pads by a multilevel interconnect across a scribe line on a front side of the wafer, or by a via interconnect that traverses from the front side of the wafer to a backside of the wafer.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising fabricating a wafer containing a CMOS circuitry to connect to individually addressable electrodes.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the CMOS circuitry is to amplify a signal and read or write information on the individually addressable electrodes.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the CMOS circuitry comprises a switching scheme for individually addressing different working electrodes on the wafer.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising interconnecting die pads by interconnects to carry out a chemical reaction on a plurality of working electrodes of the plurality of dies.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing the chemical reaction on the working electrodes of the plurality of dies.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the chemical reaction is not within a porous substrate on the working electrode.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein said performing chemical reaction comprises electrochemically generating a reagent that reacts with a molecule on a surface of the working electrode.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein said performing the chemical reaction comprises generating an acid on the electrode to generate a deprotecting reagent through an electrochemical reaction, deprotecting molecules by an acid-catalyzed reaction to form deprotected molecules, and bonding the deprotected molecules to the working electrode.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein said performing the chemical reaction comprises applying a specific potential to the confinement electrode to confine protons adjacent to the working electrode and prevent diffusion-controlled spreading of protons to a neighboring working electrode.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein said performing the chemical reaction comprises providing (a) a free radical initiator having a radical generation site or (b) a polymerization terminator.

12. The method of claim 6, wherein said performing the chemical reaction comprises a living free radical polymerization.

13. The method of claim 6, wherein said performing the chemical reaction comprises providing a substrate capable of supporting a polymer array synthesis.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the substrate is a porous substrate.

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising separating the plurality of dies by cutting the wafer into individual dies.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising mounting one or more of the plurality of dies on a substrate.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising mounting one or more of the plurality of dies on a substrate and providing an electrical connection through a contact on a backside of the wafer.

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